Kerosene and Domestic LPG, which continue to be subsidized products, have become market-determined. The public sector oil companies are fixing the consumer prices after taking into consideration the prevalent international oil prices. With a view to facilitate smooth transition from the APM era to a free market scenario, the public sector oil companies did not increase the prices of petrol and diesel for the first two months of APM dismantling *i.e.* April and May 2002 despite an increase in the international prices. Further, with a view to contain the impact of increase in international prices on the domestic prices of petrol and diesel, the Government reduced the excise duty rates on these products by 2% with effect from the midnight of 3rd/4th June 2002.

Closing down of Life Insurance Corporation

†*32. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK : Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision to close-down the Life Insurance Corporation of India or to make its functioning ineffective which has the highest turnover and earns highest profits; and

(b) if not, the reasons for extending closing of the year ending on 31st March, 2002 and what would be the effect thereof on the Corporation's efficiency ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Life Insurance Corporation of India has informed that they receive a large volume of business during the month of March every year. Where money has been received upto 31st March (for which no extension is given) they allow time upto 16th April for completion of formalities. The formalities relate to certification of age, moral hazard reports and in respect of high sum assured cases references to re-insurers abroad for pre-approval and special medical reports. This year the Corporation received about 61.2 lakh new proposals in the month of March as compared to 53.1 lakh in March, 2001 and allowed two days extra time upto 18th April for completion of these proposals. This extension of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

time for completion of formalities has no adverse effect on the Corporation's efficiency and proper completion of formalities is in the interest of the proposers.

National Library, Kolkata

*33. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to convert the National Library, Kolkata into an autonomous institution;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the National Library worked without a librarian from 1972—1983 and again from 1995—2001;

(d) whether during the last few years Directors of the Library were appointed either on part time basis or on *ad hoc* basis; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN) : (a) and (b) The National Library Act, 1976 provides for giving autonomous status to the National Library, Kolkata. No decision has been taken so far regarding enforcement of the Act.

(c) Yes, Sir. A regular Principal Library and Information Officer is in place since July, 2001.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The person appointed as Director, National Library in 1998 left the Organization abruptly within 6 months of his joining. The post has since been filled up on *adhoc* basis. Efforts made to fill the vacancy on regular basis through UPSC have not been successful so far.

Customs duties on imported foreign liquor

*34. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the additional customs duties on imported foreign liquor has been reduced from what it was in the previous year;